

name, an abbreviated form of the person's company or name, or a series of digits or alphanumeric characters that must be entered to indicate to the electronic mail system the destination address of the recipient processor. Another item is an identification of the originating processor which may be an indication of the sender or the originator's name, company name, an abbreviated form of the originator's name or company name, or a numeric or alphanumeric entry that comprises the sender's name or address. This information is collectively an identification of the originating processor. Another item is the subject of the message which is typically a short reference as to the subject matter of the text or message that follows. Finally, the message or message text must be entered which is the information that is inputted by the person or machine which is originating the message at the originating processor A-N. Upon completion of the message text, the user or machine operating the originating processor A-N enters a series of commands or keystrokes on the originating processor to transmit the message to the gateway switch with mailboxes 14 associated with the originating processor A-N.

The transmission of the message from the originating processor's gateway switch with mailboxes 14 to the destination processor's electronic mail gateway switch with mailboxes is via analog or digital communications through the public switch telephone network. The destination gateway switch with mailboxes 14 contains the destination address of the recipient destination processor.

Upon arrival of the information at the destination processor's gateway switch with mailboxes 14, one of two events takes place. The information is typically stored in the destination processor's electronic mailbox for later retrieval by the destination processor through interaction by the user of the destination processor. This typically happens as a result of the fact that a person is not located at the destination processor at the time of delivery of the message to the gateway switch with mailboxes 14 or the destination processor is not turned on and connected to the public switch telephone network 12. A second methodology is that the destination processor's gateway switch with mailboxes automatically dials the gateway processor's telephone number to deliver the information. In the situation where the destination processor is within a company or organization, the information may be delivered to the host computer. The destination processor's host computer stores the information until the destination processor calls the host computer to retrieve the information. In both of the methodologies described above, information delivery requires periodically calling a host computer on a mailbox at the gateway switch with mailboxes 14 to determine if new messages are present. This incurs additional costs in telephone calls and/or labor. If the host computer or gateway switch is not checked frequently, the information becomes untimely in its delivery. If the destination processor frequently checks the host computer or gateway switch, then additional costs and telephone calls and/or labor are encountered.

As personal computers are used more frequently business travellers, the problem of electronic mail delivery becomes considerably more difficult. A business traveller carrying a portable PC has great difficulty in finding a telephone jack to connect the PC to fetch electronic mail from either a host computer or a gateway switch. Connections for a PC's modem are difficult to find in airports and with the advent of digital PABX's in businesses the telephone connectors are incompatible with a PC's analog modem. Hotels and motels oftentimes have internal PABX's that prevent calls from automatically being placed by the user's PC to electronic

mail gateway switches to retrieve information. Most portable PC modems will only operate correctly when connected to a true outside telephone line that has telephone battery voltages and dial tone available to permit the number to be dialed direct. The inability to find an appropriate connection to connect the PC modem when travelling has contributed to the degradation of electronic mail reception when the recipient is travelling. When travelling internationally, this problem is further compounded by the fact that most electronic mail gateway mailboxes require a 1-800 toll free number to be dialed in order to connect the mailbox. Almost all 1-800 telephone numbers are available for continental use only and cannot be accessed from a foreign country.

Industry trends make it increasingly difficult to receive electronic mail. When PC's were exclusively considered an office or desktop machine, it was less difficult to deliver electronic mail. Advances in the state of the art in micro-electronics have permitted PC's to be downsized to very lightweight portable (notebook), and notebook size computers. These portable units have the computing and storage power of the former desktop units and have lent themselves to the trend that they now become very portable in their utilization. They are small enough that they can easily fit into an attache case and/or a suit pocket. The net result is that the portable unit no longer resides in the office or the desktop. The portable unit now may be taken home at night, as well as on travel with the user, such as for business travel. Increased portability of PC's further aggravates the problem of automatic electronic mail delivery as a consequence of portability eliminating the wired communication paths which have been typically used in state of the art electronic mail systems. The electronic mail industry is currently experiencing a rapid growth rate.

Numerous communication companies are offering forms of electronic mail services. However, a problem arises that users of one electronic mail system currently cannot send electronic mail to a subscriber of another electronic mail system (e.g., AT&T E-mail to Sprint Mail, etc.). Numerous attempts are currently underway in the industry to solve this problem. Current attempts are the utilization of common protocols between electronic mail systems (e.g. X.400). However, the proposed system does not resolve the problems resultant from portability and travelling situations described above.

FIG. 2 illustrates a diagram of a prior art network 100 developed by Telefind Corporation of Coral Gables, Fla., which provides worldwide paging and data transmission capability and is a preferred form of the RF information transmission network used in practicing the present invention. This network is described in detail in U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,866,431, 4,868,558, 4,868,562, 4,868,860, 4,870,410, 4,878,051, 4,881,073, 4,875,039 and 4,876,538 and U.S. patent application Ser. Nos. 409,390, 464,675, 465,894, 464,680, 429,615, 429,541, 409,605, and 456,742 which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety. The system is a distributed network of switches comprised of a plurality of local switches 112, a plurality of lata switches 114 and a plurality of hub switches 116 with each switch being located in a different geographical location within an area being serviced by the system. The hub switches 116 may be located totally within a country to provide national service or in multiple countries to provide international service. Only a single portion of the network is labelled with reference numerals with it being understood that repeating portions exist such as for that portion under the jurisdiction of hub switch #P. Communication links which are illustrated as